



Council 4 AFSCME
Testimony before the Judiciary Committee of the
Connecticut General Assembly
March 17, 2014

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Matthew Brokman and I'm a representative of Council 4 AFSCME. Our union represents 32,000 workers across Connecticut.

Thank you for raising **HB 5488: AA Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Probate Court Personnel.**

Probate Court employees that have approached our organization about forming a union have identified the disparity in health insurance cost as one of several workplace issues that affect their ability to serve the public. Reducing their health insurance costs will make their lives more livable, and their benefit package more in line with similar employees who work for the state. We believe this legislation is long overdue.

It is worth noting that the state employee health insurance plan is the product of negotiation between unionized employees and the state. Probate Court personnel did not have the opportunity to be a part of those negotiations. Under this legislation, probate court personnel would pay the same amount for their health insurance as active state employees. Again, in this case, active state employees have the ability to negotiate over their contribution to health insurance – something probate court personnel do not have the ability to do.

This legislation produces a large benefit to probate court personnel and should pass. We believe that in addition to passing this bill as written, probate court employees deserve the right to collectively bargain over health insurance, wages, and other conditions of employment. Currently, Raised Bill 5066 would accomplish that objective and bring equity and fairness to these dedicated public employees who deserve better than to be treated as at-will employees.